

PLT 7-12 CONCEPT REVIEW SHEET

Concepts addressed:

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 was the first piece of legislation protecting the rights of personal with disabilities. Section 504, a civil rights law, prohibited the exclusion of individuals with disabilities from participating in, being denied the benefits of, or being discriminated against in any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.

- (1) has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life
- (2) has a record of such an impairment, or activities such as walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning, working, caring for oneself, and performing manual tasks,
- (3) is regarded as having such an impairment.

In public schools, students who meet the above definition are eligible to benefit from this legislation. Section 504 mandates a free appropriate public education for students covered including individually designed programs. This means that eligible students must receive an education comparable to the education provided to non-handicapped students. Students can receive related services under Section 504 even if they are not provided any special education; an Individualized Accommodation Plan (IAP) must be developed for the eligible student and often mirrors an Individualized Education Program (IEP) as mandated in IDEA.

Section 504 students typically have less severe disabilities than their special education counterparts, thus, they usually do not demand the high level of modification typically required for students in special education. The purpose of the law is to provide meaningful access to the public schools for students with disabilities. Some of that role is now shared with the IDEA which serves students with more severe disabilities.

Section 504 is an anti-discrimination statute which requires that the educational needs of disabled students are met as adequately as the needs of non-disabled students.